

# NEWSLETTER

## Bringing Our Community Together via Communication



### Meet Our New Neighbor

I'm Allie Jones. I first lived in Summit County in the late '80's and early '90's. In 1994, I moved to Estes Park. In Estes Park, I owned the Grubsteak restaurant for 20 years, a restaurant specializing in burgers, steaks and wild game. I sold the restaurant and purchased the Selna's home on Topaz. I am now enjoying semi-retirement with a part-time job in a rare bookstore and volunteering at the Summit County Animal Shelter. I love to ski, hike and scuba dive. I look forward to meeting everyone.



### Editor's Note

The big news hereabouts is the residential real estate market in Summit County, with prices up +51% in May vs. year ago and an average sale price nearing \$1,000,000. Over 20% of homes in the County recently sold for over \$2 million. The average home is selling in five days vs. 28 days a year ago and 55 homes were sold in May vs. 18 a year ago.

Now that's news, and Ruby Ranch owners are reacting to it. Seven homes are currently listed for sale on the Ranch, all over \$2 million each. All told, over a third of Ranch homes are in flux, with either new owners (12) or homes for sale. And that's not counting the very substantial amount of home renovation work constantly underway on the Ranch.

We hope to help rebuild our sense of community and welcome new neighbors in several ways. First, these newsletters will introduce new people to their neighbors. Second, our neighbor, Ashley Johnson, is revising the website to make it more current, user-friendly, and helpful to new people. And third, we look forward to the annual HOA party to "Meet our New Neighbors." The process begins with an introduction nearby.

And thanks as always to our neighbor, John Longhill, for superb wildlife photos!

### A big help from our friends

Summit County just gave us a big boost for our fire mitigation efforts, when they awarded us a total of \$95,250 in wildfire mitigation grants to be spent this year on Ruby Ranch projects. \$39,000 will go toward paying almost half the cost of the environmental study required before a firebreak can be cut in the Eagle's Nest Wilderness on our western Ranch boundary.

Another \$56,250 will pay about a quarter of the cost to interconnect our two water storage tanks remotely, so the Fire Departments can rapidly bring a full 103,000 gallons to bear on a fire almost anywhere on the Ranch, versus about half that amount if our tanks were not interconnected.

For perspective, our annual working budget for the entire Ranch is about \$330,000, so \$95,250 is a sizable amount. Thank a County Commissioner the next time you see one. In particular, thank Josh Blanchard who took the time and trouble to come out to the Ranch, walk the areas in question, and help us make this good stuff happen.



### Eagle's Nest Firebreak Sailing Along

And speaking of the Firebreak, our neighbor, David Radlauer has been riding herd on that project and here is his status report:

"There have been several developments since our last report on the Forest Service's fuels reduction project in the Eagles Nest Wilderness adjacent to our boundary.

**First**, the public comment period on the project scoping expired at the end of April. We are very pleased to report that all of the comments supported the project. For example, Summit Fire & EMS observed that 'Ruby Ranch homeowners have invested substantial amounts of money and made concerted efforts to improve the likelihood of their homes withstanding a wildfire,' and concluded that the Forest Service's proposed project 'will further enhance our ability to defend them from a catastrophic wildfire.'

The HOA and Willow Brook Metropolitan District boards submitted a joint letter in support, as did several individual homeowners. Thank you to those individuals who discussed the project with interested parties beforehand and to everyone who submitted a comment.



**Second**, field work began after the snow melted. Peak Ecological, Western Bionomics, and Metcalf Archeological Consultants, have completed surveying the project area. We understand that they found nothing that might significantly impede the project. Next steps: SE Group and the Forest Service are working towards a final decision expected in late September.

**Third**, Bobbi Filbert, the Acting District Ranger who met with us on her first day on the job in January and



who pushed the project forward, returned to her home in Idaho in May. We wish her the best and thank her for her interest and great leadership. The new District Ranger, Adam Bianchi, picked up where Bobbi left off. On June 3, 2021, EJ Olbright and David Radlauer gave Adam a walking tour of the Upper Emerald boundary and the Festa Ridge. Also on the tour were: Josh Blanchard, County Commissioner; Cynthia Ebbert and Kathleen Gray, Dillon Ranger District, and Ash Smith and Eric Neumeyer, SE Group.”

**What Could Be Better?**

Then having a dedicated Ranch Manager doing what needs to be done at Ruby Ranch? The answer is “Having our Ranch Manager (Patrick O’Flynn) assisted by enthusiastic volunteers who lend a helping hand with the work.” Finishing touches were needed on the Gatehouse and our neighbors, Vicki and Ron Hattin stepped up to do the work, as is shown in the nearby picture. This involved a lot of tedious trim, so many thanks to Vicki and Ron!

A Ranch Manager’s workshop needed to be framed in at the barn, as shown in a second nearby picture and as a by-product of the state-required water system improvements discussed below. Our neighbor, Jon Rovick, who is a home builder, stepped forward with his framing crew and offered to do the necessary work. Many thanks to Jon and his crew.

Patrick has a long “to do” list. If you would like to help, by all means contact EJ Olbright, President of the Willow Brook Metro District, who is helping Patrick find his way around and will help you help Patrick and the Ranch.

And speaking of “Ranch Manager”, all newsletters, beginning with this one, will include a segment on “Ranch Manager Update” written by Patrick and forwarding his thoughts on key aspects of the Manager’s job and how things are going. Welcome, Patrick!



*Ruby Ranch Manager—Patrick O’Flynn*



*Vicki and Ron Hattin*



### Summit County Alert System

Everyone on Ruby Ranch should be signed up for the Summit County Alert System, which can be done at [summitcountyco.gov](http://summitcountyco.gov). Life in the High Country is fraught with unusual dangers! To quote the County website:

“The Office of Emergency Management uses Summit County Alert (powered by the CodeRED software system) to send emergency notifications by phone, email and text to keep community members informed of events such as evacuation notices, utility outages, water main breaks, wildfires, floods and hazardous materials spills.

SC Alert is also used to communicate non-life-safety information, such as planned road closures, school delays/cancellations, community meetings, utility repairs and service interruptions.”

The Alert System is a “must have” if you live (even part time) on Ruby Ranch and it could well be your first line of defense in case of wildfire.

### What was all the digging at the Barn?

You may have wondered at the serious excavation work on the west side of the Barn. RKR, our waterline contractor, installed a back flow valve inside the Barn to prevent our drinking water from being contaminated by a back flow as well as a water meter. As the ranch grows in number of homes, the State government requires a different classification for the operational requirements of the water system. We have reached the density requiring numerous upgrades. The back flow preventer is one of the requirements. Basically, this is your Metro District government being on top of things.



*False chamomile daisies*

### Banner Crop of Weeds!

The Canadian thistles and false chamomile daisies have never looked healthier (and that is a bad thing!) Pretty, yes, but if you want to see how fast these can crowd out native plant species, you need only to have looked at the barn, where four to six man-days were just invested in hand-pulling thousands of chamomile daisies, bagging them, and hauling them to the dump (thanks Patrick and Jon Rovick.) The daisies, and Canadian thistles (another offending noxious weed) are pictured nearby.

In the future, our Ranch Manager will spray our hayfields in the spring and fall with a horse-safe herbicide, as well as our roadsides and community property, such as the area near the barn. It is the responsibility of lot owners to keep private lots weed-free, using whatever approach they deem best so long as it is effective.



*Canadian Thistle*

For those who want free loaner backpack sprayers, contact Ryan Cook at (970)668-4252 and pick up a sprayer at the Frisco transit center behind Walmart. Details regarding this program can be viewed at [summitcountyco.gov](http://summitcountyco.gov).



## Annual Lot Clean Up and Chipping

The annual free chipping service will be on Ruby Ranch sometime during the week of July 19. The parameters for this program can be viewed at [summitcountyco.gov](http://summitcountyco.gov) and were also outlined by Lisa Lewis in her recent Firewise newsletter. Ruby Ranch homes have been leaders in chipping large quantities of standing and down dead wood, low hanging branches and other fire hazards in past years.

As you build your “chipping pile” please snap a photo and email it to [drlisalewis@sustainacenter.com](mailto:drlisalewis@sustainacenter.com) so she can send it to the Firewise authorities as partial justification for the annual renewal of our Firewise Certification. We continue to explore ways to reduce our fire insurance cost as a reward for this certification (as well as a reward for our fire hydrants.)

### Who you gonna call?

Suppose your water line ruptures Christmas week or the road in front of your home collapses with the spring thaw. What do you do and whom do you call? The Metro District Board has adopted policies to cover any problem associated with Ranch infrastructure (e.g., roads, water, trash, weeds, gates, etc.) and those policies are appended to this newsletter.

For non-emergencies, you go to [ruby ranch.com](http://ruby ranch.com) and fill out a Work Order which goes directly to our Ranch Manager for prompt handling. rr-general will not be monitored for work orders nor requests.

For emergencies, you call **303.381.4960 (Community Resource Services)** which is a 24/7 hotline for even quicker handling.

Please contact Marcos at [mpacheco@crsofcolorado.com](mailto:mpacheco@crsofcolorado.com) to gain access to the website. No doubt you will want to read over, and perhaps print out and save these very important policies.

### Great rocks but what about the signs?

A number of neighbors have asked, “Will there be something saying Ruby Ranch at the main gate; are the plastic street signs at Emerald and Pearl the long term signage; do you envision more monoliths at other locations in the future?”

Our neighbors, Nan and Dave Anderson both of whom are architects, know an expert at designing signage for subdivisions like ours, and are assisting the Metro Board in developing a signage plan via that expert. For now, suffice it to say that the present signs are temporary expedients and the long term solutions will have the same high quality look and feel you see elsewhere on the Ranch.

## Ranch Manager’s Update by Patrick O’Flynn

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First and foremost, I would like to thank the entire ranch community for the warm welcome my family has received. We would like to extend a very heartfelt thank you to everyone.

Second, I would like to give the Ranch community an update on the work that has been taking place during my first month of employment:

- The majority of my time has been spent familiarizing and maintaining the irrigation ditches and meadows that are so vital to the Ranch.
- In addition, work is being done on organizing the gatehouse to serve as an office for conducting the business portion of this position.
- I am currently working on gaining knowledge with the operations and maintenance of the Ranch’s newly installed gate.
- I am working towards developing a weed management program for the Ranch. I do expect this to be ongoing.
- We are working on completing a shop in the barn to serve as a secure place to store all tools that the Ranch will acquire.
- I have been working on the maintenance of our fences around the barn and various meadows.
- We have been working with the Summit Ford dealership to ensure the up fitting of our truck will be sufficient for the upcoming winter. This will be crucial for the success of our snow removal program.

It was a very busy and productive first month of my employment. I look forward to building this position. To the homeowners I’ve met, it’s been a pleasure, and to the homeowners I have yet to meet, I look forward to it. Thank you for the opportunity I have no doubt this will be a successful year at Ruby Ranch.

### Emergency evacuation in case of wildfire

The Fire Committee met recently to consider a range of issues, including emergency evacuation, and centered on two issues, along with the role our Ranch Manager could play in each.

#### **“First, how do you get out of the gates as fast as possible if chased by a wildfire?”**

The main gate will be locked open by the Ranch Manager, who can do it remotely from his phone or computer.

The code for the emergency gate, whose location is pictured nearby, is “4200”, so the first person through can unlock it and leave it open for everyone else.

#### **“Second, can we use our irrigation ditches to fight a fire?”**

The Ranch Manager, or a backup person if the Manager is absent, will flood the meadows to retard a fire, if time permits. On Filing 1, water may be sufficient to flood Tracts A and C which are above houses. On Filing 2, we can probably flood all the hay meadows, mostly benefiting Smith Ranch.

We are at the beginning of what may be a tough fire season. Feel free to send along other ideas if you have some.



*Follow the red line at the top of the photo, right off of Pearl Lane, down to the Willow Brook emergency exit, if needed. “4200” unlocks the padlock on that gate.*